

Duffy is recognized for this award due to her involvement and attributes in a number of areas; including training, physical fitness, emergency scene conduct, attitude, and riding time. During the Fall 1998, when the Department was acclimating four new employees and working to certify them for minimum staffing roles, Fire Fighter Duffy used a week of vacation time to assist with this essential activity. Additionally, she spent many hours assisting several new volunteer members of the Department with gaining their Fire Fighter I and II certification. Fire Fighter Duffy also sacrificed her regular compensation and free time to be part of the Department contingency that was deployed to Ormond Beach, Florida this past summer to assist with fighting wildland fires.

Police Officer of the Year: PFC Carl R. Pardini: During 1998, K-9 Officer, PFC Pardini was recognized on numerous occasions for his outstanding performance of duty and initiatives in developing a more coordinated K-9 unit. An example of his outstanding performance involving a very difficult K-9 case occurred on March 9, 1998. This case was particularly difficult due to the rainy weather conditions, which affects the tracking ability, and the location of the suspect's hideaway. In order to have a more coordinated and effective K-9 unit, he drafted a canine operating procedure and developed a record system for documentation of all formal and informal canine training.

Dispatcher of the Year: Dispatcher Betty I. Powers: During 1998, Dispatcher Powers was commended more than once for her high level of professionalism and expertise while working in the Communication's Section. In particular, this recommendation was based on her professional handling of three serious felony incidents, two of which occurred almost simultaneously. Throughout all of these incidents, Dispatcher Powers was working alone and unassisted.

I am deeply impressed by the caliber of services that these fine public servants provide with admirable distinction. It takes a special calling and extraordinary commitment to choose public service as your life's work. I congratulate each award winner for their momentous recognition and extend my gratitude to you for your selfless dedication to the safety and well-being of the citizens of Fairfax City.

RECOGNITION OF HARMONY FIRE DEPARTMENT'S 75 YEARS OF SERVICE

HON. ROBERT A. WEYGAND

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Mr. WEYGAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the volunteer fire department of Harmony, Rhode Island on the occasion of its 75th anniversary.

Founded in 1924, the Harmony Fire Department has provided an invaluable service to the citizens of the Harmony area. For three-quarters of a century, the dedicated volunteers have risked their lives for the sake of their neighbors. These men and women, the fire-

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

fighters and emergency medical technicians of the force, donate their own time and resources for the community good. When the alarm bell rings, or, more appropriate to modern living, when the pager beeps, the volunteers leave the comfort of their homes and families, forgetting their own problems and concerns, with one singular goal in mind: helping others in need. Whether this service comes in the form of fighting fires, saving lives or providing comfort to the distressed, the Harmony volunteers always give to their fullest extent. In recent years, the demands on the department have steadily increased, straining the limited resources of the force. Nonetheless, the volunteers have risen to the occasion, redoubling their efforts and meeting new challenges.

Generally the goal of firefighters is to maintain the order and stability of the community around them. The Harmony force has taken its involvement one step further by providing a special service to the area. In preparation for the 75th anniversary celebration, the 28 volunteers have joined with other community members to compile a pictorial history of the Harmony Fire Department. By collecting pictures of the organization's past, the citizens of Harmony will be able to relive special moments and events in their collective history, thus fostering a better sense of community among them.

I laud the volunteering spirit of the Harmony Fire Department members as well as their understanding of community spirit. The bravery and steadfastness of the volunteers are greatly appreciated by both the residents of Harmony and myself. I congratulate them on 75 years of dedicated service and wish them many more years of success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GENE TAYLOR

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, on February 11, as a result of a hostage crisis that took place in my congressional district which required my direct intercession, I missed the final vote of the day, rollcall vote 21. After several hours of tense negotiations and through the fine work of the local, state and federal law enforcement officials, I am pleased to report that the hostages were all rescued without any loss of life or injury. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 21.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, earlier today, February 23, 1999, I missed rollcall votes 22 and 23. Today, I received a briefing from the Vice Commander of United States Southern Command that ran longer than expected. As a result, my departure from the Headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command in Miami was delayed. I unfortunately did not arrive back in Washington in time to vote on the two suspension bills, H.R. 193 and H.R. 171. Had I been present at the time the votes were called, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall vote 22 and "yea" on rollcall 23.

February 24, 1999

THE IMPORTED FOOD SAFETY ACT OF 1999

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 24, 1999

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, almost a year ago a number of my colleagues and I introduced legislation aimed at improving the safety of the imported food consumed by Americans. The Congress failed to act. Regrettably, consumers continue to become sick, and in too many cases die, from eating contaminated food. These tragedies are avoidable. We have the means to arm FDA with sufficient authority and resources to protect our food supply. There are exciting advances in technology that may make tests for microbial and pesticide contamination easy to perform and affordable.

The bill we are introducing today is virtually the same as the one we introduced last year. To its critics, including many of my colleagues in the majority, I say, let us see your proposals. Let's do the people's business and improve the safety of our food supply. I challenge the majority to at least hold a hearing on the subject of food safety. Let's hear from consumers, public health experts, and all others with an interest in this matter. I am confident that none will dare defend the status quo.

The General Accounting Office (GAO) has reported that as many as 81 million cases of foodborne illness occur each year. Perhaps as many as 9,100 of these cases result in death. Under our current food import program there is virtually no preventive testing. Food shows up on the dock. Less than one percent of fresh fruit and vegetable are tested. The tests take a week or more to yield results. In the meantime the food is long gone, by then consumed. Let me repeat that point. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) too often waits for consumers to get sick or die before it tries to determine whether the food supply contains pathogenic contaminants. The outrageous and wholly intolerable conclusion one must draw is that American consumers are being used as guinea pigs.

There are special problems with imports. FDA lacks authority and resources to "trace back" the source of foodborne illness beyond the border. Furthermore, imported food inspected by FDA fails to meet certain government health standards nearly three times more often than domestically produced food. Any preventive detection FDA might attempt would be futile, because FDA lacks adequate tests to detect pathogens on imported food in a timely manner. Finally, FDA cannot even account for what happens to imported fruits and vegetables that are adulterated.

The Imported Food Safety Act of 1999 is critically important from a public health standpoint. It is also consistent with the international trade obligations of the United States. The World Trade Organization's Agreement on the Applications of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures reaffirmed that health and safety considerations take priority over trade. Member countries may, for justifiable health and safety reasons, impose more stringent requirements on imported products such as food than they require of domestic goods. This legislation is consistent with this exception.